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ABSTRACT

The method developed by Herbert Simon to study social movements through analysis of leadership is divided into (a) rhetorical requirements, (b) rhetorical problems, and (c) rhetorical strategies. The author contends that for movement studies in general, Simon does provide a good outline and guide for use by the rhetorician, but that it is difficult to apply this theory to the women's liberation movement, because the leader-centered approach conflicts with evidence that the women's movement seeks to dissuade any hierarchical structure. This may be an insubstantive issue, however, in that whether a specific leader or a group as a whole provides the direction, both must still contend with the rhetorical problems, requirements, and strategies. The author believes that, as an overall goal, contemporary feminists are striving through various rhetorical strategies to achieve the right or power to assert an individual identity. (EE)

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THE APPLICATION OF HERBERT SIMON'S THEORY OF ANALYZING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS TO WOMEN'S LIBERATION

For rhetoricians, the 1960's have provided innumerable opportunities to initiate studies on movement groups. However as Herbert Simon stated, "given the usual problems of estimating the effects of a single speech, of assessing the factors that may have produced those effects, and of evaluating the speech in light of the speaker's intent, it is not surprising that few rhetoricians have undertaken the much more difficult task of analyzing the role of persuasion in social movements."[1] Dr. Simon noted that Edwin Black prior to his book, A Study of Method (New York, 1965), could find only three articles in the previous decade on this subject in either the Quarterly Journal of Speech or Speech Monographs.[2]

However, since 1965, there have been several attempts at studying aspects of a movement (i.e., the rhetoric of confrontations, studies of coercive versus persuasive rhetoric and a rhetorical situation analysis of parts of the movement as for instance, a study of the student riots at Columbia University). But studies of the entire movement have been relatively scarce, possibly due to the lack of directional theory or method in which to follow.

Herbert Simon in his article "A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements," attempts to provide a method to study the entire movement through the analyzation of the leadership. As he puts it,

> "This paper has attempted to provide a broad framework within which persuasion in social movements, particularly reformist and revolutionary movements, may be analyzed. Derived in large measure from sociological theory and from an examination of contemporary cases, it has examined rhe-

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> torical processes from the perspective of the leader of a movement. The requirements he must fulfill, the problems he faces, the strategies he may adopt to meet those requirements."[3]

Granting Simon's basic theory, this paper proposes to illustrate the effectiveness of his study by applying it to the newest movement, Women's Liberation.

The Women's Liberation movement began in the mid-1800's when the fore-mothers of the present day feminist strove for women's suffrage, which culminated in 1920 with the radification of the 19th amendment. However, women were to find out that the right to vote was not the panacea they were looking for. Pollard's and Keck's article "Women's Struggle: An Historical Overview," concluded,

> "The Suffragist movement, in limiting its programs to achieving the vote, failed to come to grips with the conditions which kept women down in America....Most of them were shocked that when the vote was achieved in 1920 nothing happened at all. Women were still discriminated against in employment and exploited in the home. And society was certainly no better because women voted."[4]

Today's feminist concur in most respects, for their goals are quite different. It is not that the past generation feminist didn't have the same problems as the today woman, or that they didn't recognize it, for they did. It was just that the old feminist believed the vote would achieve their desired results. Today, women know they didn't, and are trying to change the immediate forms of discrimination.

In stating an overall goal, this author believes that they are striving through varied rhetorical strategies to achieve the right or power to define for themselves just what they are.[5] At present the male decides

through customs what the female wants, her goals and her role in society. It is to be able to chose for themselves just what they want is their desired goals.

The structure of this paper will follow the outline of Simon's paper which he divides into: (a) rhetorical requirements, (b) rhetorical problems, and (c) rhetorical strategies. Considering first rhetorical requirements, he lists three.

The first one is "they must attract, maintain, and mold workers (i.e. followers) into an efficiently organized unit."[6] He says there must be a hierarchy in which people are willing to take orders and give up social pleasures.

At the outset, the women's movement has inherent organizational problems. The inherency resides in the marriage institution. It has been the marriage institution itself which caused the movement to be so late in starting, because the women felt their problems to be unique. And it is this isolation by the marriage institution which makes organization difficult. Redstockings Magazine of July 7, 1969 elaborates, that,

> "...Because we live so intimately with our oppressors, in isolation from each other, we have been kept from seeing our personal suffering as a political condition. This creates the illusion that a woman's relationship with her man is a matter in interplay between two unique personalities and can be worked out individually. In reality, every such relationship is a class relationship, and the conflicts between individual men and women are political conflicts that can only be solved collectively."[7]

Further disorganization comes from the belief of women's movement groups that a hierarchy is bad and that there should be no leaders. This

is especially evident in the radical groups. Barbara Mehrttof explains,

> "...What the women's movement has to do is to develop a self defined class of women based on equality among all. If we keep within our class the hierarchial structure which results from our displacement among men our struggles will be doomed to failure."[8]

Gloria Steinem, in awomen's rally in Austin, Texas, claimed that only the news media had made her a superstar. However, while there is no national organization or even a network of small groups there does seem enough woman-power to, at times, achieve enough workers to put on demonstrations, publish pamphlets, etc.

Dr. Simon's second requirement is that "they must secure adoption of their product by the larger structure (i.e., the external system, the established order).[9] Here they must enuciate clearly and loudly the deprivations of the larger groups, discriminatory laws and the sharp discrepencies between conditions and expectations. In this the feminist have been successful. The issues of economic discrimination, pay differentials, second-class citizenry roles due to being a mere "sex-symbol," and the issue of abortions have become quite known within the conscious of many women, whether they are doing anything about it or not.

The third requirement Simon notes is "they must react to resistance generated by the larger structure."[10] Resistance must come from reaction of the larger structure which may be either too kind or too restrictive. To both reactions women's movements have counteracted.

Senator Birch Bayh's subcommittee on constitutional amendments which was studying the Equal Rights Amendment in 1970, was confronted by the al-

legations of three Washington D.C. liberationists, that Congress was "frantically searching for a way to co-opt a growing women's revolution."[11] They argued:

> "....the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments promised, constitutional equality to black men, but now, after 100 years of legalistic doubledealing in the legislatures and the courts, black people have learned that they must struggle in the streets and seize what is rightfully theirs. For women, as for blacks, equal rights are a beginning.
>
> They offer us equal access to higher education, but we know and especially today, that this is an equal opportunity to be shot and slaughtered on the campus.
>
> Finally, they offer us equal representation on juries and equal criminal penalties within a totally corrupt and repressive judicial system. So-called justice for the Panther women in New Haven means being without bail in solitary confinement, being pregnant with no medical care, giving birth under armed guard, having the baby taken away by the State without the mother's consent, and later being used as a bribe for false testimony."[12]

Resistence to conditions being too restrictive has extended from confronting editors who printed pornographic materials, to picketing the headquarters of candidates for mayor of New York City for failing to take a stand on Women's rights.

To the women's movement leaders maximizing or even obtaining Simon's goals have been very difficult, and very slow moving.[13] But this difficulty is not surprising to Simon for, "social movements are severely restricted from fulfilling these requirements by dint of their informal composition."[14] He further conjectures that "shorn of the controls that characterize formal organizations, yet required to perform the same internal functions, harassed from without, yet obligated to adopt to the external system, the leader of a social movement must constantly balance in-

herently conflicting demands on his position and on the movement he represents,"[15] which leads him to his second divided sector, the rhetorical problems.

The rhetorical problems which are actually dilemmas facing the women's movement leaders are many, but can be culminated under the general heading of the woman's role in society.

The dilemmas are quite evident. For example, how can radical feminists expect all women to come under their rally flag when the feminist group WITCH (Women's International Terrorists Conspiracy from Hell) attacks the Bridal Fair in Madison Square Garden singing "here comes the slaves," and ending their demonstration by releasing 100 white mice.[16] Or can liberation leaders really expect mass approval as they attacked the "epitomy" of the woman's dream, the Miss America Pagent, shouting "Miss America Sells it."[17] And when organizations as SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) symbolize their rage by refusing to take their husband's name, to use make-up or shave their body hair, it makes the millions of women who spend billions of dollars for cosmetics wonder how a member of SCUM ever got a man, much less married him.[18] Final blows must come when radical leaders attack the marriage institution itself, claiming as Ti-Grace Atkinson does, that "marriage is rape and life long slavery,"[19] and that prostitutes are the only honest women for they charge for their services instead of submitting to work without pay by the acceptance of a marriage contract.[20] Ultimate alienation might come also with the liberation's espousal that socialism is the panacea for women, in which just the mentioning of socialism often

causes the average woman to equate such desires however erroneous with communism, which is very much undesirable.

And yet the leaders of such radical liberationist movements faced with the dilemma that such actions might cause women on the periphery of the movement not to identify with the movement,[21] are yet faced with finding rhetorical methods other that these blatantly attention seeking ones in which their goals might still be made known,, Ergo, the goals and beliefs that marriage is keeping the woman from developing her true self, the protest of the cosmetic industry's not too subtle brainwashing, and the frustrating rebellion that the woman is merely a "sex-symbol," are seeking an acceptable method of expression.

As a result of these dilemmas, the womenss movement itself has split, and re-split, trying to adopt to an image that might be acceptable to the larger structure as a whole. It is this spiit and the arguments within the movement itself as to how best enhance the women's movement, that formulates Simon's third division, the rhetorical strategies.

In choosing which rhetorical strategies might be used, Simon has "along the continuum from the sweet and reasonable to the violently revolutionary, one may identify moderate, intermediate and militant types of strategies."[22]

The best example of the moderate strategy presentation is put forth by the National Organization of Women (NOW). McDowell describes the NOW members, "as a little older and somewhat more affluent than their more militant confreres. They are big-city career women, suburban wives rather

than student wives, and are probably as likely to be as liberal as the New Left."[23] Their rhetorical strategies have entailed the picketing the New York Times because of "male-only" help-wanted ads, initiating court cases involving rights under Title VII of the 1964 civil rights legislation and lobbying for less restrictive abortion laws. They also have lobbied against the Carswell nomination who ruled that a woman with a preschool child could be denied a job, and they have been trying to extend Title VII to the educational field. For these actions which are basically legal in nature, have been called the NAACP of the women's liberation.[24]

On the opposing end, where rhetoric is used as an instrument, an act of force, rather than as an alternative to force, is the militant. The tactics of militants have been previously cited. Their unique characteristic is their belief that socialism will end discrimination of the economic system which presently exploits the female through the marriage institution as well as the working field. Who further believe that socialism will rid the United States of the concept of the nuclear family which is a capitalist device to provide a low-cost labor. Two examples of rhetoric illustrate these polar positions.

The moderate position can be exemplified by Representative Edith Green who spoke in supports of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1970:

> To my colleagues may I say that women's courage, women's hopes are beginning to falter when they realize that the 'daily impinging of fact upon fact' has done little to persuade the men in the National legislative body and in the State legislatures to correct an injustice that has existed since our country was born. I suggest that the time is long since past when women should be required to be treated as second-class citizens and not entitled to

> the same equal rights under the Constitution as are the male members of our society."[25]

In opposition to this type of speaking is Roxanne Dunbar, who illustrates the radical Liberationist rhetoric:

> "We are damaged and we have the right to hate and have contempp and to kill and to scream. But for what?... Do we want the oppressor to admit he is wrong?...He is only too happy to admit guilt-then do nothing/..That does not make up for what I have lost, what I never had, and what all those others who are worse off than I never had.... Nothing will compensate for the irreparable harm.... How could we possibly settle for anything remotely less, even take a crumb in the meantime less, than total annihilation of a system which systematically destroys half its people."[26]

In the middle trying to appease both sides, and possibly ending in appeasing none, are the intermediates. They do not insist on a socialist revolution. "Rather they demand for equal wages for equal work, for free choice between work in the home and outside, for pay for housewives, for public child-care centers, for free abortions upon request, for better contraceptions, for women's labor unions, and for reform of 'sexist' and racist tracking in education and child-rearing."[27] This group could exist because of a splitting of hairs over weighing rhetorical strategies, admittedly. But there does seem to exist a group in between the militant and the moderate which are usually very small, quiet, seeking only to raise the conscious of their members.

At present, no studies have been made to determine which method is more effective. This is possibly due to the relative youth of this movement, which if so, only time will tell. Simon projects that the militants will be noticed more, be more energetic, have more affect on the power

vulnerables (leaders of a public or quasi-public institution such as an elected official who could be hurt by bad press releases), and trives on all injustices. The moderate groups, are more likely to get into the decision-making centers, need small successes to keep going, are easier to control as a group, and have more effect with the power invulnerables, (i.e., the man on the street, the women of day-bridge clubs).

SUMMATION

This paper has illustrated the Simon method of studying social groups by applying it to the latest movement, Women's Liberation. For movement studies in general, Simon does provide a good outline and direction by which the rhetorician may use and still not be stifled from using his imagination. It is very adaptable, for one may use the general direction whether one is doing an indepth analysis of a movement, or a more general exploratory one. As to its applicability to the sisterhood, there seems to exist a major contradiction in applying this theory.

The contradiction lies in its basic leader centered orientation, for there is much evidence that the women's movement actively seeks to dissuade any hierarchial structure. However, this contradiction is possibly superficial in that whether a specific leader or the groups as a whole provides the direction, both must still contend with the rhetorical problems, strategies, and requirements. If so, then Simon's method maintains its profitability.

As to the feminist movement. Most conclusions at this time would be too presumptive for the movement as still young and spurting in growth.

Its initial sprint for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment of which it has thirty-one states, has slowed significantly as a backlash has been organized in the State legislatures. It has further won a technical knockout victory in the Supreme Court's ruling that women be allowed to obtain an abortion. Its victory is technical in that many of the male-dominated State legislatures are balking at providi g additional funds to the hospitals for this service. It is just too early to tell, but if the sixties was the decade for the blacks and youth, possibly the seventies will be for the women.

FOOTNOTES

1. Herbert Simon, "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies of Persuasion for Social Movements," Quarterly Journal of Speech, Vol. LVI (February, 1970) No. 1, p. 1.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 11.

4. Found in Sookie Stambler, Women's Liberation Blueprint for the Future, New York: Ace Books, 1970, p. 268.

5. Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran, Woman in Sexist Society. New York: Basic Books, 1971, p. xiii.

6. Simon, p. 3.

7. Leslie Tanner, Voices From Women's Liberation. New York: The New American Press, 1971, p. 109.

8. Ibid.

9. Simon, p. 3.

10. Ibid, p. 4.

11. Hamida Bosajian and Haig Bosajian, The Greatest Argument the Rights of Women. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1972, p. 215.

12. Ibid.

13. Ti-Grace Atkinson contends that "there is no movement. Movement means going some place and the movement is not going anywhere." (Women's Liberation Revisited Time, March 20, 1972, pp. 30, 31.)

14. Simon, p. 4.

15. Ibid.

16. Margaret B. McDowell, "The New Rhetoric of Woman Power," The Midwest Quarterly (Winter, 1971) Vol. XII No. 2, p. 193.

17. Peter Babcock, "Meet the Women of the Revolution 1969," New York Times (February 9, 1969), p. 34.

18. Margaret B. McDowell, p. 191.

19. Ti-Grace Atkinson, cited by Charles Winick and Paul M. Kinsie, "Prostitutes," Psychology Today, February, 1972, p. 57.

20. Sara Dickinson, "An Oppressed Majority Demands its Rights," Life. December 12, 1969, p. 19.

21. This author while attending the San Antonio's Mayor's Commission on the status of Women Convention was told very explicitly that this was not a women's liberation meeting even though they discussed such items as economic discrimination, educational discrimination, and why more women should get into politics.

22. Simon, p. 7.

23. Margaret McDowell, p. 196.

24. Ibid.

25. Hamida Bosajian and Haig Bosijian, p. 242.

26. Margaret McDowell, p. 192.

27. Ibid, p. 190.